The Establishment of Church and Mission at Paud (Mulshi)

Preface:

This booklet is a tribute to the enduring legacy of the Paud Church and Mission, documenting a journey of faith, service, and community that began in the late 19th century. As we celebrate the 114th Anniversary of the church building, we look back at the pioneers who "tilled the soil" of this region—from the steadfast ministry of Rev. Raghavendra Nevaskar to the compassionate leadership of missionaries like Miss Jane Harvey and Miss Wallis Smith.

Within these pages, you will find historical accounts of the first "village missions," the establishment of the region's first Marathi-medium schools, and the medical outreach that transformed the Mulshi Valley into a hub of social progress. These stories, drawn from personal letters and archival reports, remind us of the deep bonds formed between the Scottish mission and the local Indian community

We hope this collection serves not only as a record of the past but as an inspiration for the future, honoring those who dedicated their lives to the service of God and the people of Paud.

The Lord's Beloved Church - Hymn by Rev Dharmaji Kale

Great is the Lord’s, and great in this world, is the most beloved Church.
She stands alone as the beautiful reflection of Heaven.

By giving His own life’s worth, Christ has redeemed her.
In this world, she alone remains pure and spotless.

The Lord’s true love is upon her, and her love is upon Him.
Blessed indeed is the Bride of Jesus!

O City of God, may your memory remain with us constantly.
This is the deepest prayer we hold in our hearts.

Paud Church was an important out-station of the United Free Church of Scotland (**UFCS**) Pune Mission during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As a "village mission," it was supervised periodically by senior missionaries from Pune, while the actual services and ministry were carried out by local Indian pastors and medical missionaries.

Miss Eleanor Bernard:

Miss Eleanor Bernard arrived in 1870 to work with the Zenana Mission, a branch of the Church of Scotland in Pune. She continued her service until 1912.

Rev. Raghavendra Nevaskar:

On September 29, 1878, a young priest named Raghavendra Nevaskar was baptized in Pune, despite strong opposition from his family. He later studied at the Theological Seminary in Ahmednagar for two years. Initially, he lived in Pune for a few years, working as a teacher and a preacher. Around 1890, honoring the wishes of the missionary mother-figure Miss Eleanor Bernard, he accepted a call to work as a preacher in the Paud Valley and Mulshi Peta.

Carrying his household belongings in a bullock cart, he arrived in the village of Ghotawade with his wife, Godavari, and another preacher. They pitched a tent in a mango orchard (Ambrai) on the outskirts of the village.

However, upon learning they were Christian preachers, the landowner explicitly told them, “Do not stay here and do not take water from our well.

That very night, through prayer and medicine, Raghavendra saved the landowner’s daughter from a severe bout of typhoid. Consequently, the same owner began pleading with them to stay in the orchard as long as they wished, telling the entire village, “These are people of God.” Seeing that the Almighty was with him, Raghavendra set out for Paud with renewed enthusiasm.

Except for the four months of the monsoon, he would spend eight months traveling through the Paud Valley and Mulshi Peta, sharing the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ. During the rainy season, living in a tent was not possible.

During the famine of 1895–96, the Collector entrusted him with the responsibility of bringing grain from Pune and distributing it to the local residents. Because of this, the locals began to welcome him with great respect and listen to his preaching. In 1896, missionaries Miss Bernard, Miss Kesting, and Miss Lowe accompanied Raghavendra to Paud. In this way, God "tilled the soil" of Paud before the church was officially established. (A detailed account is given in the book 'Majha Ashrayacha Khadak' — My Rock of Refuge).

In November 1916, the Mumbai Presbytery ordained Raghavendra as a Pastor. He was given the responsibility of serving the churches in Paud, Pune, and Dapodi. He passed away on August 6, 1921. Miss Harvey, a missionary, testified of him: "He had an extremely humble nature; he did not even know what anger was."

Miss Jane Harvey, D.C.S. (1860–1945)

Jane was the youngest daughter of **Thomas Harvey** (1823–1901), the **Rector of the Edinburgh Academy**. She arrived at the Zenana Mission in Pune in 1900 for missionary work. To be more effective in her future service, she completed a year and a half of Deaconess training at her own expense. Even while stationed in Pune, she continued to cover her personal expenses from her own pocket.

In 1903, a bungalow was constructed in Paud for the missionaries, and Miss Jane Harvey began residing there to carry out her mission work. In 1905, her elder sister, **Rebecca Harvey**, came to visit her. Rebecca donated 7,000 Rupees for the construction of the church in Paud. After returning to her homeland, Rebecca passed away in 1909.

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF
REBECCA BARNETT HARVEY,
DAUGHTER OF THOMAS HARVEY, L. L. D.,
OF EDINBURGH.
WHO BEQUEATHED THE FUNDS FOR THE ERECTION
OF THIS CHURCH IN FURTHERANCE OF THE MISSION
OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND IN INDIA, AND OF THE
DIVINE COMMAND TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY
CREATURE.
THIS TABLET IS INSCRIBED BY HER SISTER
JANE WILSON HARVEY, D. C. S.,
A MISSIONARY OF THE CHURCH IN THIS LAND.
"ती पुढल्या काळाला हसते." नीति. ३१:२५.

Miss Jane Wilson Harvey

The Paud Church was subsequently built using the funds bequeathed by Rebecca. The church was constructed between 1911 and 1912. A memorial plaque regarding this is located within the Paud Church.

Educational Initiatives:

The Mission School at Paud began its operations in 1910. Following this, the mission opened schools in various villages throughout the Paud Valley region.
These included:
Paud, Andesh, Daravali, Gardavane, Akole.

Miss Jane Harvey retired in 1922. She passed away in Pune in 1945.

Miss Wallis Smith: The Mother of Paud

M**iss Wallis Smith**, daughter of **Rev. Henry Wallis Smith,**served as the Chief Supervisor of the Church of Scotland's rural center at Paud. Although she held an official title, she was known throughout the region simply as "**Mamma**." She showered maternal affection on the boys and girls of the boarding house, often seen sitting with young children on her lap. Her heart was a spring of natural compassion, which allowed her to remain dedicated to the region for a long period from **1922** to **1948**. She told Bible stories to the children, conducted Sunday School, and led church worship services when necessary. When she and Rev. D.G. Kale went from village to village to preach, she would ride a white horse while the Pastor rode a brown one.

Miss Wallis Smith (representative image)

Educational Management and the "3 Rs":

She managed several "Vernacular" (Marathi medium) schools where the entire curriculum was taught in Marathi. These schools were specifically for the children of local farmers and laborers.
The education focused on Bible stories alongside the "3 Rs" :

- Reading
- Writing &
- Arithmetic

Miss Wallis Smith coordinated various teams of Scottish and local staff. Her work laid the foundation for rural literacy and women's empowerment through:

- **Rural 'Zenana' Classes:** Beyond formal school buildings, she organized informal educational classes for women and girls in Paud and surrounding villages like Pirangut. At a time when public education was often denied to them, these classes were their only source of learning.

- **Industrial Training:** To help young women become economically independent, she included basic industrial skills like sewing and embroidery in the curriculum. She taught knitting using broomsticks and threads salvaged from packaging.

- **The Boarding Workshop**: The boarding house featured a workshop where girls (referred to as Akkas) worked on looms to create 1.5-foot-wide mats for children to sit on in church. There was also a long house dedicated to poultry farming, and nearby "Drumbek" areas for children's indoor games.

Local Leadership and Medical Outreach:

Most of the daily teaching was conducted by local Indian Christians whom Miss Wallis Smith trained and mentored. These individuals were crucial in bridging the cultural and linguistic gap between the Scottish Mission and the local community.

During the months when Dr. Martin and Miss Wallis Smith were in camp, they provided medical services to the rural population. Additionally, except during the monsoon, a dispensary was operated in Paud every Saturday. This dispensary was vital to Miss Wallis Smith's work; it helped maintain contacts made during the itinerating season (traveling ministry) and gave people from outlying villages the chance to hear the Gospel every market day.

Key Associates and Mission Staff:

In the early 1900s, Miss Wallis Smith worked within a disciplined network of missionaries in the Pune district namely:
Dr. Rankin and Dr. Greenfield: Medical missionaries who frequently traveled to Paud with her to provide healthcare at the mission dispensaries.

Miss Harvey: A senior colleague from the Pune Mission who collaborated on 'Zenana' initiatives across the district.

Rev. J.M. McKeggie: A prominent figure in the Church of Scotland's Pune staff who handled the administrative affairs of the out-stations.

Because of Miss Wallis Smith's constant presence, Paud was transformed from a mere visiting point into a permanent educational and social hub for the Mulshi Valley.

Letter from Miss Harvey, written from Paud in 1910:

"It has been nearly three months since I returned here. The number of girls doing lace-work has increased. While I was home during the summer, five girls were working; now I have eleven very enthusiastic young workers. On January 1st, the school in Paud commenced. Today, seventeen or eighteen children were present. Poor women, mostly from the lower castes, come twice a week in the mornings, and they have repaired our road. Almost every day of the week, a large group of people gathers to hear the Gospel; and during prayer time, when the entire household assembles, there are usually about twelve people listening, and sometimes many people who have come from afar for medicine are also present.
Miss Bernard has provided me with a man for preaching in the villages, and he is excellent. He speaks from the heart, has some experimental knowledge of the truth, and besides, he is full of life, enthusiasm, and youthful vigor. When he speaks, people listen attentively. It is a joy to see how intently they listen, and we feel that some of the frequent visitors and our own servants are now being awakened. This man was with Miss Wilder of Islampur, of whom you must have heard, and he has received a good education.

Letter from Miss Harvey, written from Paud in 1910 (continued):

He and I have visited all the nearby villages. He has also gone to some villages that I have not yet been able to reach, which I regret. Visiting villages has always been my favorite part of all the work here. I have made use of my bicycle, but most villages do not have roads; each has its own rough path. Dr. Youngson has gone out into our district with two of our Indian Christian men, Raghavendrarao and Honaji.

Our man is also accompanying them, and they are staying out all day, touring our vast district very thoroughly and rapidly. Last Sunday, when Dr. Youngson came here, Miss Alexander was staying with us for a few days. They arrived with Honaji while we were conducting a service in the schoolroom, and it was a great pleasure to see Dr. Youngson presiding over the meeting. With everyone from our household, there are usually about thirty people at that meeting. People are coming for medicine more than before.

They have had the benefit of advice from two doctors, as Miss Dr. Bernard was here for two days, and Dr. Rutter Williamson (of the U.F. Mission) very kindly came in his motor car, along with a dispenser and a good stock of medicines. He is very keen to treat an elderly woman from this area. '...He is very anxious for that old woman to come to the hospital and have her eyes operated on. If she returns with her sight restored, it will have a great impact on her village. She is one of those who has heard the Gospel for the past decade. I wish we could tell you about the opening of their spiritual eyes. I am sure many are holding themselves back; either they do not wish to see, or they are afraid to see because they have grasped the truth.' Miss Gardner has been with me for the past two months and has been a great help to our team."

Miss Wallis Smith's Report:

In 1929, Miss Wallis Smith wrote that the children in the Paud boarding house were thriving and "quite happy in their homes." A significant focus was placed on vocational skills; the children began a new type of weaving, crafting their own sleeping mats and small mats for Miss Gordon's Kindergarten students.

The spirit of community was most evident during the Christmas season. The "old boys and girls"—former students of the mission—would travel back to Paud, eager to return "home" for the holidays. These celebrations, centered around a morning prayer service and a shared Christmas tree, remains a cherished memory of the mission's history.

Sources and Acknowledgments:

The historical information presented in this booklet has been carefully compiled from various archival records and publications, including:

- *The Biography of Rev. Nevaskar (Majha Ashrayacha Khadak)*
- *Foreign Mission Committee Report Files (Church of Scotland)*
- *The Zenana Magazine (Historical records of women's mission work)*
- *Missionary Periodicals and Personal Correspondence (1870–1945)*

Poona Staff with Dr Ogilvie

Back Row: Mr. M. Lelan (Chaplain), Mrs. MCaul, Mr. MCaul (Chaplain).
Middle Row: Mr. MacKeggie (Missionary), Miss Harvey, Dr. Greenfield, Miss Edwards, Dr. Rankine, Miss Greenshields.
Front Row: Mrs. MacKeggie, Mrs. Ogilvie, Dr. Ogilvie, Mr. Nelson (Chaplain), Miss Wallis Smith.

Commemorative Note:
This booklet is a gift of love on the occasion of the **114th** Anniversary of the **Paud Church (Mandali),** dedicated by:
James, Suman, Salome, Rahel and Preeti Kale.
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